

I'm Susan Wagle, President of the Kansas Senate.

My fellow Kansans. We are humble, hardworking, and responsible people. We don't spend money we don't have on expenditures we can't afford. And we expect the same of our government.

While we've had some difficult years, I can happily say we have come through the worst of it. As 2019 begins, revenues have rebounded, and we have a small surplus. Unfortunately, Governor Kelly's first budget would squander our fiscal recovery with a massive spending increase that would deepen our debt and require another major tax hike.

Governor Kelly has proposed expanding Medicaid under a broken ObamaCare system while many Kansans are already suffering from skyrocketing premiums in the individual marketplace. In fact, insurance premiums have increased by over 200 percent since Obamacare was implemented.

At the same time, she would have us surrender to the edicts of an unelected Supreme Court, spending even more than the billion dollar increase already approved for public education through 2023.

Candidate Kelly promised no new taxes. Governor Kelly has proposed a budget that will absolutely require them.

The Republican Majority in the Kansas Senate stands ready to work with our former Senate colleague, but not at the expense of Kansas families.

Kansas workers can't demand a raise from their boss to cover new spending, nor should state government in the form of higher taxes.

We are just now digging out of the hole of the past decade. It's time to put down the shovel, not deepen the hole.

As president of the Senate, I will work with the Senate to pay off our debts to KPERS and spend responsibly without raising taxes.

In fact, we will pass a bill that allows Kansans to take full advantage of the Trump tax cut. Governor Kelly has vowed to fight the decoupling of federal and state tax deductions. But we're not backing down.

We believe Kansans should be able to deduct interest on their mortgages, property taxes, and health care expenses.

The windfall from the Trump tax cuts belongs to Kansas taxpayers, not government.

We want to limit government in order to create unlimited opportunity. That means passing a stable, responsible budget that invests wisely in schools.

While we have already committed more money for education, we need to now focus on achieving improved student outcomes. We need to raise standards and achievement in our schools, reward excellent teachers and emulate models of teaching success.

We need to transform schools so every high school graduate is career or college ready. Students on an alternative track to a four-year college should have every chance to succeed. That's why we are going to continue to support job training and protect our investments in technical and trade schools.

I congratulate Governor Kelly on her election as governor. While she earned the opportunity to lead this state, Kansas voters also sent a more conservative legislature to Topeka in 2019.

As written in the preamble of our state constitution, we the people of Kansas are grateful to a mighty God for our civil and religious privileges.

We will continue to stand for conservative Kansas values, such as life, liberty and fiscal responsibility.

We will defend Second Amendment rights because every law-abiding citizen has a right to defend themselves and their families.

We will fight for greater choice and competition in the health insurance marketplace. 98,000 Kansas families have suffered from skyrocketing premiums under ObamaCare. They deserve more affordable options, and we will work with the Trump Administration to offer them.

We believe the best long-term source of revenue for government is job creation, not higher taxation. Now is not the time to spend money we don't have on programs we can't afford. We tried that, and it hasn't worked.

Now is the time to unleash job creation and spread opportunity far and wide-- to bring economic revitalization to the hustle and bustle of our inner cities and to the rolling plains of our most rural counties.

I have 15 grandchildren. They are my pride and joy. I want a brighter future for them, and every child in Kansas.

A brighter future requires wise fiscal stewardship. For their sake, we will pass a responsible budget, pay off our debts, and invest in education. For Kansans working in today's economy, we will pass on the full benefit of the Trump tax cut, so they can have more money in their pocket to save for the future.

These are the priorities of Senate Republicans, because they are the priorities of the people of Kansas. We hope the governor joins us in pursuing the path to prosperity, that invests more in our people, not bigger government. Thank you and may God continue to bless the great state of Kansas.

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